

Application No.: 10/036,993Case No.: 56336US002**AMENDMENT****In the Claims:**

Please amend claims 1, 14, 15, 28 and 29 and add new claims 47 - 49 as follows:

1. (amended) A removable core for supporting a pre-stretched elastomeric tube in a radially expanded condition comprising:

an extruded tube having a first end and a second end,

at least one primary line of localized weakening starting at the first end and terminating at the second end of the extruded tube, and

a plurality of substantially parallel secondary lines of localized weakening, wherein each secondary weakening line extends from the at least one primary weakening line at the one side thereof to a termination point at the other side of the at least one primary weakening line and spaced apart therefrom and wherein adjacent secondary weakening lines alternately extend from the at least one primary weakening line to termination points on opposite sides of the at least one primary weakening line to define at least one strip beginning at the first end of the extruded tube and continuing substantially in a serpentine manner to the second end of the extruded tube.

14. (amended) The removable core according to claim 1, wherein the primary and secondary weakening lines are formed using means to remove material from the extruded tube including methods of ablation selected from the group consisting of laser ablation, electron beam ablation, plasma ablation and fluid jet ablation and methods for mechanically cutting the extruded tube.

15. (amended) A removable core for supporting a pre-stretched elastomeric tube in a radially expanded condition comprising

an extruded tube having first and second opposite ends,

at least two primary lines of localized weakening starting at the first end and terminating at the second end of the extruded tube, and spaced apart in circumferential dimension of the extruded tube, and

Application No.: 10/036,993

Case No.: 56336US002

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a plurality of substantially parallel secondary lines of localized weakening, wherein each secondary weakening line extends substantially circumferentially of the extruded tube between two adjacent primary weakening lines from one primary weakening line to a termination point spaced apart from the other primary weakening line and wherein adjacent secondary weakening lines between two respective adjacent primary weakening lines alternately extend from different primary weakening lines to termination points spaced apart from the respective other primary weakening line to define at least two strips each beginning at the first end of the extruded tube and substantially circumferentially continuing in a serpentine manner to the second end of the extruded tube.

28. (amended) The removable core according to claim 17, wherein the primary and secondary weakening lines are formed using means to remove material from the extruded tube including methods of ablation selected from the group consisting of laser ablation, electron beam ablation, plasma ablation and fluid jet ablation and methods for mechanically cutting the extruded tube.

29. (amended) A removable core for supporting a pre-stretched elastomeric tube in a radially expanded condition comprising

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a unitary extruded tube having first and second opposite ends,

a plurality of sections of a primary line of localized weakening spaced apart and arranged adjacent to each other wherein the arrangement of the plurality of primary weakening line sections extends from the first end of the extruded tube to the second end thereof and

a plurality of substantially parallel secondary lines of localized weakening, a group of the secondary weakening lines being associated to each of the primary weakening line sections, respectively, wherein each secondary weakening line of the group extends from the associated primary weakening line section at the one side thereof to a termination point at the other side of the respective primary weakening line section and spaced apart therefrom, wherein adjacent secondary weakening lines of the group extend from the respective primary weakening line section at

Application No.: 10/036,993

Case No.: 56336US002

A3  
different sides thereof to termination points at the respective other side of the respective primary weakening line section, and wherein from one end of a respective primary weakening line section there extends a secondary weakening line at the one side of this primary weakening line section to an opposite end of an adjacent primary weakening line section at the other side thereof to define a strip beginning at the first end of the extruded tube and continuing substantially in a serpentine manner within the areas of the plurality of primary weakening line sections and continuing substantially helically between respective adjacent primary weakening line sections to the second end of the tube the strip comprising a free end starting from the second end of the extruded tube and extending through the extruded tube so as to project from the first end of the extruded tube.

47. (new) The removable core according to claim 1, wherein the extruded tube has a substantially continuous wall having a substantially uniform thickness between the first end and the second end.

A4  
48. (new) The removable core according to claim 15, wherein the extruded tube has a substantially continuous wall having a substantially uniform thickness between the first and second opposite ends.

49. (new) The removable core according to claim 29, wherein the unitary extruded tube has a substantially continuous wall having a substantially uniform thickness between the first and second opposite ends.

Enclosed herewith is a version of the amended claims with markings to show changes made relative to the earlier version of claims.